

## Back to School with a Healthy Smile!

By Allan J. Milewski, D.D.S.

It seems like summer just began, but here we are again getting our children ready to go back to school. Whether you are checking off items on a school supply list, or getting them ready to head off to college, don't forget these student tips for maintaining a healthy smile!

Brush at least twice a day with a fluoridated toothpaste. I know that young people, especially teenagers, often roll out of bed a few moments before the bus honks it's horn, but you should never leave your house in the morning without brushing your teeth. Chomping on a bagel on the way to class may save time, but it could lead to decay. The starches in carbohydrates can combine with bacteria on leftover food in your mouth and produce acid, which leads to decay. According to the Academy of General Dentistry, carbohydrate laden foods, such as chips, bread, pasta or even crackers can be as harmful to your teeth as candy. Eat a healthy, balanced breakfast then brush your teeth before you leave your house in the morning!

When you decide what your child will eat for lunch, choose wisely. Check the sugar content of those juice boxes, you may be surprised at how much sugar your child is gulping down. If your child is heading off to junior high or high school, beware of pop machines! Soda pop with the decay causing combination of sugar and carbonation are readily available, often with disastrous effects on your child's dental health. Send your child to school with low sugar food and drink alternatives, and encourage them to rinse their mouth out after they eat.

And don't forget after school snacks! You know your child will walk into your home and be ravenous, so have healthy fruits and vegetables ready for them to grab. If your child is staying after school for an activity, pack them a healthy snack. If you don't, they will head to the sugary choices in the vending machines which are expensive and can lead to dental decay.

Back to school time is a very busy time for families. Take a minute and discuss healthy dental choices with your child. And keep on smiling.

For more information on your students dental health, contact Dr. Allan J. Milewski at (330) 725-2242, or visit us on the web at [www.MedinaFamilyDentistry.com](http://www.MedinaFamilyDentistry.com). Dr. Milewski is a general dentist practicing in Medina.